

United States Views on Regional and Security Situation
ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference (ARF ASPC)
Kent Mullen, U.S. Mission to ASEAN
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- I would like to take this opportunity to thank Myanmar for its wonderful hospitality and the valuable support it has provided the United States as our ASEAN country coordinator. I am grateful for their leadership and look forward to more successfully run meetings here.
- The United States is committed to strengthening the region's security architecture and working with the ASEAN Regional Forum and other regional mechanisms as one of many means to ensuring regional stability.
- Through open dialogue and practical cooperation, we make concrete steps to work together towards a future in which we may all thrive in a peaceful, prosperous region.
- Meetings such as the ASEAN Security Policy Conference permit ARF members to speak openly and maintain lines of communication, thus minimizing potential missteps and misunderstandings.
- Thus, in the spirit of speaking candidly on security challenges in the region—including traditional security challenges—I have received guidance to touch on three issues that the United States feels merit consideration in this Security Policy Conference:
 - First, considering the Korean Peninsula, ASEAN Regional Forum members have traditionally used this forum to advance our common goals of global peace and security, especially the maintenance of peace in the Asia-Pacific, and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.
 - North Korean nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs remain a serious threat not just to this region but to international peace and security writ large. Nuclear and ballistic missile programs potentially destabilize the region and undermine the global nonproliferation regime.
 - The United States has concerns with regard to short- and medium-range ballistic missile launches in violation of UN Security Council resolutions,

threats of longer-range launches, a “new type” of nuclear test, maritime actions that could lead to tactical missteps, and proliferation efforts worldwide.

- Together with our allies and partners in the Six-Party process, we remain committed to the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The United States remains open to credible negotiations to implement the September 2005 Joint Statement to and to bring about compliance by all parties with international obligations and commitments.
- Next, regarding maritime security in the South China Sea, in recent months, the region has witnessed destabilizing unilateral actions to assert claims in the South China Sea – such as restrictions on access to Scarborough Reef, interference with the efforts by the Philippines to maintain its long-standing presence at Second Thomas Shoal, enhanced enforcement actions in disputed waters, and, most recently, the deployment of an oil drilling rig in disputed waters near the Paracel Islands.
- While diplomacy has continued, these efforts need to achieve results. All parties are urged to de-escalate tensions, exercise restraint, and ensure safe and appropriate conduct by their vessels. Claimants should be working together to find ways to manage the surrounding resources, including the direct communication link mentioned by our esteemed colleague from Brunei Darussalam.
- However, it is important for us to recognize, and to ensure our senior leadership recognizes, that each time our countries pursue a course of action that is coercive or is at odds with international norms and law—whether the United Nations Charter, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, or, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation of ASEAN--such actions will make our region and the world less secure, not more secure.
- Lastly at the heart of our shared vision for the ARF and enshrined in ASEAN’s treaty of Amity and Cooperation are important principles which reflect universal values. These take note of the UN Charter and serve to guide international behavior throughout the world.
- Given our shared commitment to these values, we are concerned about the current situation in the Ukraine. Because this situation involves actions by a

participant in the ARF, the ASEAN Regional Forum has a role to play in preventing any escalation of this dispute and in supporting a just, peaceful resolution. The ARF must work diligently and remain focused on becoming the Preventive Diplomacy body that would benefit this region.

- In conclusion, despite the continuing challenges we face in the region, there is progress.
- As indicated by our esteemed colleague from Indonesia, the Philippines and Indonesia recently reached agreement on demarcation of maritime boundaries, after twenty years of negotiations. The United States is encouraged that at a time of elevated tension surrounding territorial and maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific, the Philippines and Indonesia worked constructively and peacefully through dialogue and negotiation to reach agreement on their maritime boundaries; and,
- Myanmar continues its process of reform, becoming a stronger and more successful country with each important step;
- A vibrant and active Asia-Pacific security and diplomatic architecture, with ASEAN at its core, is a key step toward achieving what all of us seek for the Asia-Pacific: a peaceful, secure, prosperous region.
- It will require sustained commitment and action by all countries in the region. We look forward to continuing our efforts together.